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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 001858

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [ETTC](#) [TC](#) [KJAN](#)

SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM ACTION GROUP - EMBASSY ABU DHABI

REF: ABU DHABI 1331

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) Summary: The British DCM convened the Abu Dhabi G-8 Counter-Terrorism Action Group (CTAG) on March 23. CTAG members discussed their perspectives of the threat environment in the UAE, and their observations of the UAE response to the recent theater bombing in Doha. Each country detailed counter-terrorism (CT) training and assistance in the UAE and discussed the uneven status of legal cooperation between their countries and the UAEG. In addition to G-8 Embassies, the UK also invited representatives from Switzerland, Australia, the Netherlands, and Spain. End summary.

Terrorist Threat in the UAE

2. (C) Less than a week after the theater bombing in Doha, the meeting began with a discussion of the current threat environment in the region, and specifically in the UAE. The consensus was that the UAE remains vulnerable to an attack like the one that happened in Qatar, but no specific threat information points to planned attacks in the UAE. None of the Missions raised their threat level or revised their travel advisories as a result of the bombing, but the UK and Canadian Embassies issued warden messages urging their citizens to remain vigilant. Turning to a discussion of the UAEG response to the Doha theater bombing (reftel), the French DCM characterized UAE security officials as "serene" in their confidence that nothing would happen in the UAE. He observed that the UAEG had reinforced and tightened its security presence at their Embassy and at the French schools. The Canadian political chief noted that UAE officials believe they are more vulnerable to an attack like the bombing in Doha, as opposed to the type of extremist activity that occurred in Kuwait in January. The French DCM (protect) revealed that his country is helping the UAEG monitor and track the activity of French citizens of Arab origin who have settled in the northern Emirates and are Islamic fundamentalists.

Country Presentations

3. (SBU) UK: The British DCM summarized his country's CT efforts with the UAE by highlighting four activities. First, the UK is currently providing training to federal and Dubai customs officials on intercepting cash couriers. Second, the UK has plans to offer training to federal authorities on forensics and crime scene management. Third, the UK is making arrangements with the Ministries of Interior and Justice and the Central Bank to offer a seminar on counter terror finance. Finally, a UK advisor will begin working in the UAE Central Bank sometime in the next few months. The advisor's mission is to examine the implementation of anti-money laundering and terror finance legislation. The DCM also noted that the UK has aviation officials based in Dubai who are assessing the security and safety of the Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports. In particular, the team is conducting a risk assessment to determine the airports' vulnerability to MANPAD attacks.

4. (SBU) Canada: The Canadian political chief outlined Canada's two new initiatives with the UAE. First, Canada has offered to train regional federal police on money laundering. Second, the UAE's National Anti-Money Laundering Committee will travel to Ottawa and Montreal April 30 through May 6 to learn about how Canada implements the FATF recommendations on anti-money laundering and terror finance.

5. (SBU) Australia: The Australians are engaged in discussions with the UAEG about offering customs training. Additionally, there is an Australian police officer based in Dubai who serves as a liaison with the Australian police.

6. (SBU) France: France is focused on bilateral police cooperation. In the next year, they plan to organize 40 training sessions -- ten of which will be devoted to counter-terrorism and crisis management. The French DCM said that he will brief the Ministry of Justice on how France has organized the anti-terrorism legal system. France is hosting

a seminar in Paris in April titled, "From the Gulf: Challenges to Security and Cooperation." The UAE Directorate of Military Intelligence has been invited to attend.

17. (SBU) Italy: Italy is providing training to the Abu Dhabi Police and the UAE military on unspecified CT training.

18. (SBU) Spain: Spain had no new training programs to report.

19. (SBU) Germany: The Germans are offering training to police officers, and although the training does not focus specifically on counter-terrorism, CT elements are covered in the training programs.

20. (SBU) Switzerland: There are no specific CT training programs or cooperation. As an aside, the Swiss DCM stated that Switzerland has designated the Dubai airport as an "unsafe airport" due to the prevalence of false documents. Anytime a plane arrives from Dubai, the Swiss have police do thorough passport checks as passengers disembark. (Note: he said this is mostly an immigration, and not a CT problem.)

21. (SBU) The Netherlands: The Dutch are not engaged in any bilateral CT cooperation, in part, because they believe it would be overkill. The DCM said his country believes that the CTAG countries should coordinate their efforts, so as to not duplicate efforts or over saturate the Emiratis.

22. (SBU) Japan: Japanese counter-terrorism assistance is mainly focused on South East Asia, but there are some areas of Japanese/UAEG bilateral cooperation. The UAE is interested in Japan's community policing system. The UAE recently sent a delegation to Japan to see how the system is designed and implemented, and police officials in Dubai and Abu Dhabi are considering adopting a similar approach to police patrols in their respective cities. Experts from a cyber terrorism department in Japan planned to conduct a workshop in early April with the Abu Dhabi and Dubai police departments.

23. (SBU) Russia: Russia does not have any specific CT training programs or cooperation.

Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties and Extradition

24. (SBU) In light of the recent log-jam in legal cooperation between the U.S. and the UAEG, the DCM queried CTAG members about the status of their bilateral judicial and legal cooperation, and whether any of the countries had Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT) or Extradition Treaties. None of the CTAG countries have extradition treaties with the UAEG. France and the UAEG began simultaneous negotiations for an MLAT, an extradition treaty, and a prisoner transfer treaty six years ago, but none of the treaties have been finalized, and negotiations are still ongoing. Like the U.S., the UK has agreed in principle to discuss negotiating an extradition treaty in an effort to encourage movement on negotiations for an MLAT, but the UK has not made the decision to actually begin negotiations. Australia is the only country with an MLAT in place, but the Australian representative noted that the process for legal cooperation is still slow. Russia and Spain noted that anytime their countries make a request, the UAEG states that an MLAT is a pre-condition for responding. The UK, Russia, Italy, and Canada are engaging in negotiations to conclude MLATs with the UAEG. The Russian political chief noted that cooperation increased once they began MLAT negotiations. Across the board, all CTAG countries reported that the UAEG does not cooperate on letters rogatory. The Spanish DCM described the process as a "black hole." The French and Canadian delegates, however, noted that the UAEG has responded favorably to the handful of deportation requests from their countries.

Next Steps

25. (SBU) By the end of April, the British Embassy will circulate to CTAG members an updated list of each country's bilateral counter-terrorism training and cooperation efforts.

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